

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 and 34-60 were pending at the time of the mailing of the outstanding Office Action. In the Office Action of 2 March 2005, the Examiner objected to claims 35-40, 44-49 and 54-58 as being of improper dependent form. Claims 1-15, 41-42, 50-52, 59 and 60 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as anticipated by US Pat. Pub. No. 2003/0004567 to Boyle. Claims 34, 43, and 53 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. By this amendment, claims 35, 41, 44, and 51 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer as to the subject matter contained therein. Claims 36-40 and 54 have been amended. No new claims have been added.

Regarding the objections to claims 35-40, 44-49 and 54-58 as being of improper dependent form, claims 35 and 44 have been cancelled and claims 36-40 and 54 have been amended to correct the dependency of these claims. The Applicants maintain that claims 36-40, 45-49, and 54-58 are now in proper dependent form. Withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-15, 41-42, 50-52, 59 and 60 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as anticipated by US Pat. Pub. No. 2003/0004567 to Boyle (hereinafter, the '567 publication). The '567 publication, however, does not anticipate the present application, which claims priority under 35 USC § 119 from German patent application 100 50 971.1, filed 10 October 2000. A certified copy of the German parent application was filed 26 November 2001. A verified translation of the German application is filed herewith. The only substantive differences between the present application and DE 100 50 971.1 are believed to be the addition of reference numeral 2.3 in Fig. 1 of the present application and the corresponding description of this structure, the second support portion, in paragraph 0027. The application resulting in the '567 publication was filed April 11, 2002, and was a divisional of an application filed November 7, 2000. Therefore, the present invention, which was fully described in the application filed 10 October 2000, was not "described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the application for patent."

(35 USC § 102(e)) Withdrawal of this rejection and the objection to claims 34, 43, and 53, as being dependent on a rejected base claim, is respectfully requested.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the previous rejections and objections and earnestly solicit the issuance of a Notice of Allowance. No fees are believed to be due with the filing of this response. However, in the event that a fee for the filing of his response is insufficient, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee deficiency or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 15-0450.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Cunniff", written in a cursive style.

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